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Herries, Edward

A letter to the editor of 'The Edinburgh review'...

[London]

[1881]

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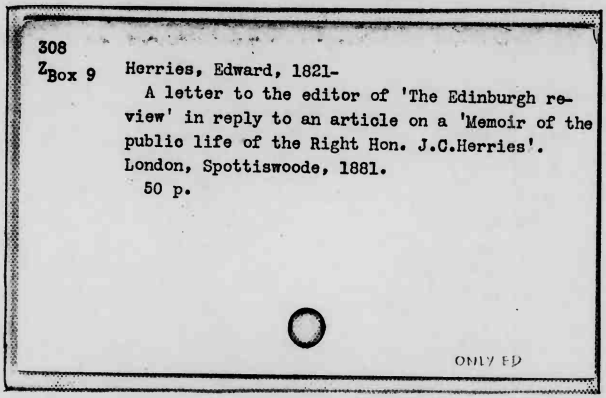

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TO THE EDITOR OF

'THE EDINBURGH REVIEW'

IN REPLY TO AN ARTICLE ON A

'MEMOIR OF THE PUBLIC LIFE OF THE RIGHT HON. J. C. HERRIES'

BY

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14 Sept. 1915 MS

LETTER.

SIR,

I have read in the current number of the *Edinburgh Review* an article, containing almost as many misrepresentations as lines, on the book which, in obedience to the imperative commands of duty and honour, I have written—with my brother's concurrence—in defence of my father's reputation against insidious and calumnious attacks.

In publishing that book, which militates against many traditional opinions and established authorities, I well knew that it must be exposed to much adverse criticism. I clearly foresaw the hostility of the *Edinburgh Review*, as the representative, or trustee, of the spirit of party animosity which my father had to encounter in ancient conflicts half a century ago. But although I did not expect generosity towards an old Tory adversary, who in bygone times had been marked out by the Whig organ as a special object of attack, I thought that the vindication of his memory by his sons might be deemed entitled at least to fair consideration and bare justice. I was deceived. The article which I am now obliged to notice, departing from the usages of modern literary warfare, shows neither fairness

towards the subject of the work reviewed nor common courtesy towards its authors. On the contrary, there is apparent throughout it a fixed purpose to damage the former and to wound the latter. With the exception of one or two cursory remarks, of which, of course, I cannot complain, on style and method, no legitimate criticism is offered, and no judicial impartiality is anywhere discernible. The evidence adduced by me is not weighed in an even balance against the assertions which it is brought to rebut. My arguments, *as stated by myself*, are not directly controverted, or honestly tried by any test of soundness. But what is not refuted is disfigured. Facts and comments are either suppressed or turned awry; cases clearly set forth by me are moulded into new forms; and by adroit arrangement a deceptive view of the contents of the book is presented to the public.

It is not party feeling alone which inspires the review. Taunts and gibes needlessly introduced, with obvious intention to offend, betray in every page the personal rancour of the writers, whose desire to discredit the memoir and injure all connected with it in public estimation cannot for a moment be doubted.

I have no means of discovering who are the vindictive persons over whom the cloak of editorial impersonality is thrown. They are not likely to show themselves openly. But I think that in some places I can detect traces of a hand not unknown to me. These persons have well calculated the advantage which is afforded to them by the wide circulation of the *Edinburgh Review*. But whether they, and you, Sir, have been as

mindful of the character of the great literary journal, the influence of which has been lent for detraction, is a question deserving the consideration of those who may read the following observations.

The review of the memoir begins and ends with passages carefully selected, with a manifest desire to give offence, from Lord Ellenborough's diary, published as recklessly as many other posthumous papers never intended by their writers to be thrown out into the world. I will not seek to deprive my assailant (critic I will not call him) of the pleasure of gloating over the exhibition which this diary affords in various places of ill-will to Mr. Herries, in common with all persons mentioned in it, except the Duke of Wellington, Sir Henry Hardinge, and Lord Ellenborough's Whig friends. But I cannot help remarking that the particular phrases quoted, and some others, do no credit to the writer or to his editor. They serve only to show the insincerity of the former and the inconsiderateness of the latter. About the time when they were put on paper, Lord Ellenborough, with the strongest professions of esteem, was pressing his colleague to undertake the restoration of the finances of India, in an office to be specially created for him, with extensive powers and large emoluments. He availed himself frequently of the services freely and cordially rendered by Mr. Herries in official matters with which that colleague had no departmental concern. There is more to be said. Lord Ellenborough's injurious remarks are wholly at variance, not only with the tone of the correspondence which I have published, and with the friendly spirit of many

other letters belonging to a later period, but also with the views indicated in other passages of his own diary. How can the words gleefully reproduced by my reviewer be reconciled with Lord Ellenborough's proposal—or scheme—for a Cabinet re-arrangement in May 1828 (Diary 1. 118, 119), whereby Goulburn being transferred to the Colonies, Herries was to take his place at the Exchequer, in exact conformity with the suggestion made at the same time by the King, whom Ellenborough detested ; and with this entry on June 29, 1830—'It seems Goulburn would be glad to be Speaker. That would open a proper office' (the Exchequer) 'for Herries, and his offices' (Board of Trade and Mint) 'might be divided ?'

The diary is full of strange inconsistencies and errors (besides the abundant mistakes arising from editorial carelessness or ignorance), affording evidence of want of reflection, or, indeed, common attention to the matters in hand. It is not my business to enumerate them. One instance, however, of extraordinary blundering may be mentioned :—

'March 20, 1829. In the House of Commons we divided, 223 to 19, on the Franchise Bill. Palmerston, Bankes, and Herries, each with his little band of people, voted in the minority.' (11. 402.)

The authorised list, to which we have referred, of the minority on this occasion, does not contain the name of Herries, or any other name which could be misread for it. The Bill on which Mr. Herries, a member of the Cabinet, is said to have voted with a section of the Opposition, formed part of the Ministerial measure for Catholic Emancipation. After such a vote, he could not have remained for twelve hours in office under such a leader as the Duke of Wellington. Let this suffice as an illustration of the accuracy of the diary and the diligence of its editor. One more observation, and I have done with the subject of this publication. It is quite clear that, when Lord Ellenborough joined the Duke's Government, and for some time afterwards, his associations and sympathies were Whig. Next to Canning and the Canningites, he hated the pure Tories. As one of them, Mr. Herries, against whom it is not unfair to surmise that his mind may have been prejudiced by his Whig friends, was an object of his aversion. And it deserves particular notice that among the principal of those friends was Mr. Tierney, the persistent enemy of Mr. Herries (11. 177).

The writer of the article tells his readers 'at the outset,' that he must speak 'in terms of disparagement' of the book of which I am the author. Disparagement is, indeed, perceptibly the purpose of the review, and no pains have been spared for the accomplishment of the task.

Fault is found, in the first place, with the 'tone' of the book. I confess that it does not display the equanimity of a candid friend, and that in dealing with matters of history its author has shown less complaisance than regard for truth. The resentment of the unprovoked injury inflicted by Mr. Spencer Walpole, which is manifested in its pages, is, indeed, admitted to be natural. But some observations, not proved to

be unfounded, on other persons offend my censor's delicate sense of decorum. In condemning them, he ought to have given a fair representation of my words with their context; and he should have assigned reasons for questioning their propriety. As he has not done so, I need only reply to his objections that sufficient grounds are stated in the memoir itself for the 'indecorous' remarks, to which exception is taken, on our Russian allies, the Whig Ministers in 1827, Lord Palmerston, the Duke of Wellington, and Sir William Napier.

I am also reproached with having imputed forgery to Lord Dalling; but this is a false imputation against myself. It is not my habit to make accusations which I have no evidence to support. If I had intended to charge Lord Dalling with forgery, I should have expressed my meaning in terms not capable of being misunderstood. I repudiate the reviewer's reading of the passages to which he refers. The first (1.194, note), 'if he' [Lord Palmerston] 'did write it' [the autobiographical sketch], conveys a simple reservation which it was my right and duty to make. In a case of disputed property, would anyone, on the production of an unauthenticated, undated, unsigned paper, calculated to affect seriously the interests which he, as a trustee or advocate, was bound to defend, at once, and without qualification, admit the perfect genuineness of the document? If he did so, he would be unfaithful to his trust. Believing, as I do, that honour is more valuable than any pecuniary interest, I claim, in protecting the former, a right which would be denied to

no man in guarding the latter. I read in the first volume of Sir Henry Bulwer's 'Life of Lord Palmerston,' a paper which contains assertions detrimental to the good fame of my father, who is in his grave. This paper, which has a fragmentary appearance, is unaccompanied by any indication of the time when, or the purpose for which, it was written; the editor does not state when, or from whom, he received it; and on examination it is found to be, in some respects, at variance with confidential letters written by the person a part of whose life it records; while on other points it is opposed to facts of which it was impossible that he should not have been cognizant. Is it strange that, in discussing the contents of such a document, I should hesitate to declare my unconditional recognition of its entire authenticity, of which I am, of course, now convinced by the tardy attestation it has received? The second passage mentioned (11.78, note) bears a different signification from the first. It raises no question, and suggests no doubt, as to the origin of the statements in the 'Autobiographical Sketch,' which, on the contrary, it assumes to have emanated, as asserted, from Lord Palmerston himself. The note gives fair reasons—which are not dealt with by the reviewer—for thinking that certain expressions attributed to Huskisson could not have been used by him, and consequently for concluding that they 'were not the words of Huskisson speaking to Palmerston, but those of Palmerston speaking to Bulwer.' I might have said '*writing to, or for*,' but the difference between the two forms is immaterial, the real point

being the correctness of the story itself. I am told in another part of the review that 'it is to the last degree unlikely that Lord Dalling should have seen the document until after Lord Palmerston's death.' But nothing said by Lord Dalling himself shows any such improbability. On the contrary, in the absence of further explanations, which the editor ought to have given, it seemed not unreasonable to suppose that the sketch might have been delivered, or exhibited, by Lord Palmerston to his biographer. Now, indeed, several months after the publication of my memoir, I am able to glean what should have been made clear at the outset from a foot-note in a new edition of the Life, published towards the close of 1879 (my remarks being then already written), and the existence of which, not even distinctly indicated by my reviewer, became known to me only a few days ago.

Those who are affected by Lord Palmerston's autobiography may justly complain of the long concealment —whatever may have been the motives for it—of particulars of time and circumstance which it was important to them to know. If Lord Dalling thought it necessary to publish all the injurious remarks contained in the 'Sketch,' and if his sense of propriety was not strong enough to induce him to give timely notice of his intention to the family of the person attacked, the most common notion of fair play ought to have prevented him from withholding from them those full explanations, the want of which was embarrassing to their defence. The paper in the appendix to his first volume is merely headed 'Autobiographical Sketch entire as

given to me.—H. L. B.' And in a foot-note to page 11 he mentions 'this autobiographical sketch as it was placed in my hands.' This is all the information vouchsafed by Lord Dalling. Why did he not tell his readers, as Mr. Evelyn Ashley has at last done, that this sketch was written by Lord Palmerston for Lady Cowper shortly before their marriage—that is to say, in 1839—and that having soon afterwards been mislaid, it could never have been revised by its writer before his death? If I had known these facts, instead of being obliged to grope in the dark, some of my remarks on the autobiography and its editor would not have been written. I might, perhaps, have expressed myself more forcibly in certain places.

Proceeding from the reviewer's 'reflections on the author's manner' to those which follow on 'their matter,' I pass over a series of sneers on various incidents in the earlier part of Mr. Herries's career. Let this writer present them to the public as specimens of his taste. There are two remarks, however, of a personal kind which must be noticed. 'Mr. Herries . . . embraced his chief's [Mr. Perceval's] opinions; he even handed them down to his sons.' This is nothing but an impertinent fiction. I admire Mr. Perceval's character, talents, and high principle. The virulence with which he was assailed by political enemies even long after his death appears to me revolting. I am convinced that all his motives and intentions were good. But his creed is not mine; and I think that on some important questions of domestic and foreign policy he was mistaken. In the body of the memoir, for which I

alone am responsible, the only opinion expressed on any of the internal controversies of his day is directly opposed to his views. The introduction contains no exposition of the opinions of its author as to Mr. Perceval's measures. It seems to me that the observation of the reviewer, however trifling in appearance, deserves animadversion. The liberty of the press is abused when a great journal avails itself of its established authority and wide circulation for the purpose of fixing upon a private individual political or religious sentiments which he has never professed, and which, in fact, are not his.

In another passage, which displays the personal *animus* of the reviewer, an unworthy attempt is made to create a prejudice against all the kindred of the subject of the memoir. The name of his brother is unwarrantably dragged into the discussion of matters with which he had no concern in order to afford an opportunity of placing a sarcastic remark as absurd as it is irrelevant. It is suggested that 'the family' had 'an hereditary claim to the comptrollership of army accounts,' because Mr. Herries having in 1811 held for a very short time a comptroller's patent, which he almost immediately resigned, 'that office was conferred some years afterwards' (about sixteen years, during which interval several other persons sat at the board) 'on Colonel Sir W. Herries,' who discharged its duties very efficiently, being thoroughly conversant, from his experience as a staff officer in war and in peace, with the business of detail which he had to transact. There

was no connection between the two circumstances so unbecomingly brought into juxtaposition.

It is satisfactory to learn that Mr. Herries's conduct at the head of the Commissariat Department during the four last years of the great war is thought deserving of some praise, judiciously tempered, however, with an appended sneer. 'It was, however, his misfortune to be perpetually misunderstood.' Such was not the fact. Anyone who takes the trouble to read my memoir must perceive that Mr. Herries was thoroughly understood, and highly appreciated by all those who had the means of knowing with what skill and activity he conducted difficult operations judiciously kept secret from the general public. The Treasury, the Prime Minister, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Lord Castlereagh, and many representatives of foreign Governments, certainly did not misunderstand him.

To the suggested answer—or a part of it—which is put forward on behalf of Mr. Spencer Walpole to my complaint of unfair suppression—'that Mr. Herries's services as Commissary-in-Chief were not universally regarded at the time from the standpoint from which his sons wish us to look upon them'—I have a right to reply that, if the universality of competent judges be meant, such a contention is contrary to evidence. I cannot find in this argument the least justification of the omission, from an account of Mr. Herries's career, of one of the most important parts of it. The preceding objection, that I have exaggerated the relative extent of the space occupied by that account, appears to me immaterial.

Perceiving, no doubt, the weakness of his case, Mr. Walpole's advocate has recourse to an attempt at retaliation—the favourite controversial arm of those who can find no better weapon—imputing to me an uncandid *suppression* of what was said in the very debate to which I have referred in censuring the writer of the History of England. I repel the charge, which I declare to be wholly unjust. The reproduction of Hansard's report (occupying twenty columns of his pages) of the debate on Mr. Bennet's[1] motion could not have been expected; but I have given the date of it—May 8, 1817. Nor did I give a summary of the arguments on both sides. And thus I left unmentioned *all that was urged in favour of Mr. Herries by Lord Castlereagh in a highly eulogistical speech which seems to have escaped the notice of the reviewer*, together with a large portion of the speech of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. But the reviewer's defective and unfair account of this business forces me to revert to it.

By a Treasury minute of the previous year abolishing the office of Commissary-in-Chief a half-pay allowance of £1,350 was granted to Mr. Herries, with the proviso that in case he should afterwards be appointed to any other office, the emoluments of which, together with that allowance, should exceed the total amount of £2,700, the half-pay should be reduced by the amount of the excess. It was accordingly reduced to £1,200 on the appointment of Mr. Herries to the then recently created office of Auditor of the Civil List, to which a

[1] The Honourable Henry Grey Bennet, a prominent member of the Opposition in the House of Commons.

salary of £1,500 was attached. The action of the Government in this matter afforded a pretext for party attack by the Opposition which was not likely to be neglected. Their contention was in substance, chiefly, that the half-pay allotted was too large; that the new office was useless and overpaid; and that Mr. Herries ought not to have been permitted to retain the half-pay (reduced) for his abolished office while receiving the salary for another place. On the part of the Government, however, it was pointed out that on taking the office of Commissary-in-Chief Mr. Herries had given up a patent place, which he might have held all his life, with a fixed salary of £1,500—exceeding the half-pay awarded to him by £150; that he had served within two years of the term, on the expiration of which, if his office had not been abolished, he would have been entitled by law to two-thirds, instead of one-half, of his salary on retirement, and that consequently the amount assigned to him could not fairly have been diminished; that as to the office of Auditor of the Civil List, it was established, together with the salary attached to it, not by Ministers, but by an Act of Parliament which they could not set aside; that the person chosen to fill it was known to be well qualified for the proper execution of its duties; that to have required him on accepting the post to receive the salary of £1,500 in lieu of the allowance of £1,350 to which he was entitled, would have been in effect to compel him with obvious injustice to undertake an office of great responsibility for the yearly remuneration of £150—one-half of what he had received as a junior clerk in the Treasury seventeen

years before ; and, finally, that if he had simply retained his half-pay, another person being appointed Auditor of the Civil List at the fixed salary of £1,500, the aggregate amount of the sums payable to both would have come to £2,850, instead of £2,700 actually received by one individual ; so that the public saved £150 per annum by the arrangement. Then, where was the 'gross extravagance' of which the reviewer speaks? I did not think it necessary to overload my pages with the tedious enumeration of these arithmetical details ; nor did I feel called upon to devote a 'quite disproportionate' space to the consideration of an invidious comparison, now resuscitated from Mr. Bennet's speech, between Sir W. Gordon (I have rendered full justice to him in another place) and Mr. Herries, upon whom had devolved duties much more extensive than those discharged by his predecessor, and of a nature wholly different. On this, like every other, point in the debate, the reviewer confines his attention to the words of the Opposition speakers, passing over in silence the replies of the Ministers. This is not all. 'We have no desire,' he says, 'to rake out of Hansard all the hard things which were said of Mr. Herries.' Wonderful delicacy, to abstain from drawing from Hansard that which Hansard does not contain! No hard things were said of Mr. Herries. Even his inveterate enemy, Mr. Tierney, was obliged to admit that he had great merits as a public servant.[1] Not Mr. Herries, but the

[1] From the tone of the speech of the Honourable Henry Grey Bennet, however, it may be gathered that Mr. Herries was far from being a *persona grata* to him. So much may be conceded to the reviewer, who may make the most of Mr. Henry Grey Bennet's authority.

Government, was the object of attack, as a letter written to him by Mr. Vansittart just after the division testifies. 'We have negatived Bennet's motion by a majority of 93 to 42. The Opposition were civil to you, and only directed their speeches against the Treasury . . . . Nobody voted for the motion except the violent Opposition, besides Bankes . . . . and I think the House in general seemed satisfied with the case, so that both you and we have good cause to be satisfied.' This letter, originally intended for insertion, was omitted along with other matter, and for the same reason—want of space.

The declarations of Mr Vansittart and Mr. Charles Grant concerning Mr. Herries's special services (ignored by Mr. Walpole), which were not disputed by the Opposition, have been quoted by me as testimonies of the high sense entertained of them by the Government. But the main question at issue, which I enabled my readers to find in Hansard, as to the propriety of a certain arrangement respecting the half-pay of one office and the salary of another, was an independent one. That question I have not entered into at all. It is, therefore, only by a strange figure of speech that I can be said to have 'omitted one half the story,' of which the other half is likewise left out. It results, from what is stated above, that there is no ground for the pretence that I have suppressed facts which I was bound to bring forward. And if the reviewer had ventured to apply to me the words which he says he will refrain from using, I should have been justified in employing the most peremptory form of contradiction.

It may suit his purpose to represent Mr. Herries as a sinecurist idler, taking money for 'doing nothing,' and other money for 'doing very little.' But he was certainly not so considered by his contemporaries, and the inspection of a quantity of remaining papers leads me to a different conclusion. The objects which Parliament had in view when a new office, with extensive powers, was created for the prevention of those exceedings of Civil List expenditure which had caused much inconvenience in past times were attained. But, besides the duties of his post, which at that time were, so far as I am able to judge, of a somewhat delicate nature, requiring tact as well as decision, Mr. Herries had various occupations. Many questions, apparently of a troublesome kind, were submitted to him by the Treasury. The winding up of the business of foreign subsidies, and the passing of the complicated accounts relating to them, involved, as I have stated, much labour. I have also shown that, as an active member of the unpaid Revenue Commission in Ireland and Scotland, Mr. Herries rendered valuable service which was highly appreciated.

As Secretary to the Treasury, however, it is admitted that he was not a drone.

Arriving at the time of Mr. Canning's Administration, the reviewer endeavours, by manipulation and re-casting, to turn from their true signification, and convert into evidence against Mr. Herries, various papers illustrative of that period which appear in my memoir. He begins by saying, 'Mr. Herries, like Sidney Wilton in "Endymion," declined to follow the example of his immediate leader, and retained his post.' But who was

his immediate leader at the moment of Lord Liverpool's retirement? If by these words, his political leader in the House of Commons be meant, the answer must undoubtedly be—Mr. Canning. If a departmental chief be intended, then the reply is—Lord Liverpool himself in the first place, or, secondly, Mr. Robinson, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who, in another capacity, adhered to Mr. Canning, and whose example Mr. Herries did follow. Mr. Herries was under no obligation, on account of party or personal ties, to follow the Duke of Wellington and Mr. Peel in their unwise secession; and in my opinion, he would not have been justified in doing so before the advent of the Whigs.

'Mr. Peel,' the reviewer continues, 'wished him to resign, but the other leaders of the party admitted that there were "valid grounds for your remaining in office rather than be the cause of embarrassment in your particular department to the King's Government." As they were doing everything to embarrass Mr. Canning's Administration, it is obvious that they must have used the phrase "the King's Government" as a synonym for the King.' An ingenious person once said, 'Give me only six lines of any man's writing, and I will undertake to hang him.' I think that my reviewer must have studied in his school. In publishing the extract which has been eagerly fastened upon for the purpose of distortion, it did not occur to me that any reader could be ignorant or malicious enough to attach to a very simple phrase any other than its proper and well-known meaning. But I now perceive that I ought,

for the information of an Edinburgh critic, to have explained in a foot-note, that the words '*the King's Government*' were a common formula generally used by persons of official habits in speaking of the Administration of the State, without any reference to the 'personal government' of the King. It is fortunate that the letter containing the phrase which is deemed so suspicious did not also mention anybody on board a *King's* ship or in the *King's* Bench Prison. Such allusions would have afforded 'confirmation strong' of the reviewer's belief in the existence of a standing conspiracy between George IV. and John Charles Herries. From the extracts printed, and from other passages omitted because they appeared superfluous, it is clear that the writer of the letter—an old and intimate acquaintance, not one of 'the other leaders of the party'—had been endeavouring, but without much success, to discover Mr. Herries's intentions. He mentions what he had gleaned at the Treasury, and, being a person conversant with official and Parliamentary business, readily recognises the validity of the reasons which were supposed to deter the Financial Secretary from resigning his post in the midst of the pressing work of the Session. In another place he says, 'It would not be right for me to give advice, for you are quite able to judge for yourself, and nothing is worse than to advise when unacquainted with all the circumstances of the case.' Nowhere in this, or in any other letter from the same correspondent, is there the least allusion to the wishes of the King. The reviewer might easily have found illustrations—if they had been needed—of the true meaning of the

passage commented upon, and of Mr. Herries's sentiments at the time when it was written, in letters from himself to Mr. Canning, in the immediately preceding pages. 'I know too well what are the business and responsibilities of the Financial Secretary of the Treasury not to be aware that I could not, without great injustice to *you*, endeavour' . . . . 'I feel that if I were to struggle on with the difficulty I experience, I might be the occasion of *embarrassment to you* by failing' . . . . 'In truth, I am too well aware of the difficulties and *embarrassments* by which *you* are surrounded . . . . to entertain a thought' . . . . Surely all this must appear honest and straightforward to any person disposed to deal with it in an honest and straightforward manner. Mr. Herries was thinking of possible embarrassment to Mr. Canning, or to Mr. Canning's Government (which was 'the King's Government'), and not at all of embarrassment to the King personally. I say, then, that the supersubtle argument of the reviewer on this point is nothing but a frivolous and vexatious cavil.

Another point picked out of a letter in the Memoir seems hardly deserving of consideration. As a mode of getting out of a difficulty in the disposal of the vacant office of Woods and Forests, Lord Goderich suggested that Mr. Herries should take that place, observing at the same time that his appointment would be agreeable to the King, and also more convenient than that of any one unacquainted with the complicated financial business of the department. Both reasons—the *second of which is not noticed* by the reviewer—

appear good. They were equally applicable to the actual appointment of Mr. Sturges Bourne, in whom the King had confidence, and who understood the business of the office.

A third point made consists partly of an incomplete, and therefore unfair, statement of a fact, and partly of an arbitrary enlargement of another fact. 'Mr. Herries, at the end of July, was in communication with Sir William Knighton on arrangements for furnishing Windsor.' This is true; but it would have been proper to add that the objects in view were greater regularity and economy. The rest of the sentence is far from the truth—'and on the whole Civil List expenditure of the King.' It is strange that the reviewer should not have perceived the disagreement between these words and his own italicised quotation, ten lines above (page 400), from Mr. Herries's letter to Sir William Knighton—'*and also on some other matters connected with Civil List expenditure*' (Memoir, 11. 49). The second paragraph of that letter leaves no doubt as to the purpose of the meeting of Lord Goderich, Lord Farnborough, and the writer with the King's private secretary. It was that they should 'come to a clear understanding of what we may not or cannot do.' And it is evident that Mr. Herries felt the necessity of a 'final settlement as to the management and responsibility of the furnishing of Windsor,' in consequence of the earnest representations of Lord Farnborough (which the reviewer ought to have observed), drawing attention (1. 148) to the confusion into which the furnishing business had fallen, and expressing his own desire—which Lord Goderich

shared—to check extravagance. Such are the laudable views which emerge from correspondence out of which a candid critic, by a peculiar process, distils this curious product: 'Lord Goderich, Lord Farnborough, and Mr. Herries, the three Commissioners on whom the work chiefly fell,[1] evidently desirous of promoting the King's wishes, travelled out of the sphere of their immediate duties into the entire question of Civil List expenditure; and Mr. Herries at the end of July' . . . . For this bold assertion, which stands as if it rested upon statements in the Memoir, there is not a semblance of foundation anywhere; and its absurdity is patent. It would be vain to attempt now to inquire what were those 'other matters connected with Civil List expenditure' which required regulation; but it may be assumed that they were of a cognate nature with the furnishing, and, like that business, within the 'sphere of the immediate duties' of the Commissioners. But the 'entire question' of an expenditure over which they had no control could not possibly have been dealt with by Windsor Castle Commissioners as such; and the whole story of the supposed action of Lord Goderich, Lord Farnborough, and Mr. Herries on this occasion may therefore be dismissed as a mere fabrication. It is worthily prefaced by remarks which exhibit the spirit of the inventor. After telling his readers that Mr. Herries had expressed to Mr. Canning his desire to be relieved of the work of the Treasury, but at the same

[1] Mr. Herries was put on the Commission in this same month of July 1827, the works at Windsor having been begun in 1824! He was not a member of the furnishing committee appointed long before he became a Commissioner.

time his readiness to undertake some department of less labour, he adds, with a perceptible innuendo, that Mr. Herries 'immediately afterwards took a step which cannot be reconciled with the reasons which he had alleged for desiring a change of office. He had complained that his health was failing' [how seriously it was so, his family and friends well knew], 'and that he was unequal to his work, and he voluntarily accepted more work.' The work so accepted was that of a member of the (unsalaried) Windsor Castle Commission, which met occasionally to consider plans and estimates! Such work was somewhat akin to that of a trustee of the National Gallery or the British Museum. Is it seriously assimilated to the official and Parliamentary labour of the office, Mr. Herries's resignation of which had been actually tendered, or of one of the less arduous posts which he was willing to assume ?

To complete what the reviewer calls the 'picture which is thus afforded by the Memoir before us,' other evidence equally valid is adduced; and, first, a story in Lord Palmerston's Autobiography, which I have insufficiently criticised, without using all the arguments which I might have employed. In examining those already brought forward against it the reviewer begins by assigning to me, neither for the first nor for the last time, remarks which are not mine. 'Mr. Edward Herries asks us to reject the story, and even ventures to doubt the genuineness of the autobiography.' The second half of this sentence is a mere interpolation. In the course of nearly three pages which I have devoted to the particular passage in question (1. 128–131) I

have not said one word indicating such doubt. On the contrary, my allusion to a remark *added* by Lord Dalling in a note, and my observations on the *animus* displayed by Lord Palmerston in this place, imply an assumption of authenticity. The reviewer's version of my reasons for doubting the truth of the story itself I decline to accept, preferring my own; and I persist in thinking that what he calls 'negative testimony,'[1] but which is the consideration of enormous improbability, is much stronger than the 'positive,' but unsupported, undefined, and contradictory assertions of Lord Palmerston. To

[1] The 'negative testimony' is not properly given in the words of the review, 'and Mr. Herries can find no trace in his father's correspondence of such a wish, and can recollect no allusion to it in his father's conversation.' I did not speak of my own recollection merely. I said that my father never mentioned the matter to any member of his family. This may be assumed with certainty from the fact that none of those now living can remember hearing of it from Mr. Herries himself, from his sister, who at the time in question conducted his household, and to whom he confided everything of personal interest to himself, or from his brother. It is incredible that neither of those two persons, both of whom survived their brother, should ever have alluded to the subject, if they had been acquainted with it, in conversation with his children. I also spoke of the total silence of my father's official friends. The late Sir Alexander Spearman was on terms of the most perfect intimacy with my father, whose private secretary he was at various times, and particularly when my father was Chancellor of the Exchequer, soon after the date of the supposed incidents. He must have heard of them if they had occurred either from Mr. Herries himself or from some of the many official persons with whom he was in confidential intercourse. Soon after the death of his old friend, Sir Alexander Spearman, whose memory was very exact, recorded for the information of Mr. Herries's children the events of his life. But neither in what he then wrote, nor in many conversations, was any mention made of the circumstances indicated in Lord Palmerston's story. I cannot help thinking that such 'negative testimony' is very strong indeed. This is not all. Mr. Plauta, the so-called Patronage Secretary of the Treasury and Mr. Herries's colleague, could hardly have failed to learn something of the suggested arrangement. But in none of his letters to Mr. Herries at the time, or some two months later, is there any allusion to it. And Mr. Herries's narrative of what passed between himself, the King, Sir William Knighton, Lord Goderich, and others, does not record any observation bearing upon the subject.

say that 'Lord Palmerston, being a Cabinet Minister while Mr. Herries was outside the Cabinet, must have known many things which were not known to Mr. Herries,' does not remove the incredibility of the supposition that a negotiation for the elevation of the latter to one of the highest offices of the State could have been entered into without his knowledge of the fact at the time, or at any subsequent period of his life. It may be concluded with almost absolute certainty, as I have already observed, that Mr. Herries never heard of the steps alleged to have been taken by the King on his behalf. If nevertheless my adversaries are determined to maintain the truth of Lord Palmerston's statement as to the King's *action* in endeavouring to make Mr. Herries Chancellor of the Exchequer, they must perforce admit that what he says of the King's *motives* is untrue, because the necessary assumption in the former case of a close reticence on the part of the King and Sir William Knighton towards the person concerned would exclude the hypothesis that Mr. Herries was the King's 'creature,' existing for the purpose of carrying out the secret wishes of his royal creator. This difficulty has escaped the observation both of Mr. Spencer Walpole and of his advocate.

My reflections on a glaring error of fact as a proof of the untrustworthiness of the Autobiography are not to be lightly got rid of by describing them as 'technical quibbling.' My objection that Mr. Herries is spoken of as occupying a situation which at the time specified was not his, which he could not then have held, and in which, if he had held it, he could not have acted in the

manner supposed, affects the value of Lord Palmerston's testimony. For if on some important points a statement against an individual can be proved to be at variance with facts well known to the person making it, is it reasonable to place implicit reliance on the rest of the inculpatory evidence of that witness? But I am told that Mr. Herries might have been styled by Lord Palmerston, Auditor of the Civil List—an office which he had long since ceased to hold—because he was engaged in some business connected with Civil List expenditure. This is a futile argument. Of course such expenditure, like every other branch of expenditure, came under the cognizance of the Secretary of the Treasury. About the same time he was in correspondence with Lord Palmerston on the subject of military retrenchment.

It is not correct to say, as the reviewer does, that an anecdote told by me (1. 129) of a conversation between Mr. Herries and Mr. Canning is produced as my 'third reason for rejecting Lord Palmerston's story.' The circumstance is mentioned by me incidentally with reference to an offer of the Exchequer seals, erroneously supposed to have been made by Mr. Canning to Mr. Herries.

Now, again, appear upon the scene the three points adverted to; and by throwing aside all respect for truth and justice the reviewer is 'able to add' to them statements or insinuations of like force. 'The department of the Treasury which Mr. Herries represented had opposed Lord Palmerston's appointment.' This is a gloss upon a passage imperfectly quoted from the

Palmerston Autobiography, in which Canning is reported to have said that 'it had been strongly pressed upon him by all' [the word *all* is omitted in the review] 'the Financial Department that it was extremely important that the First Lord should also be Chancellor of the Exchequer, and that the union of the two offices in the person of the Prime Minister, when that Minister was in the House of Commons, was attended with great official convenience.' . . . Such was the unanimous, and the legitimate, opinion of the whole financial department of the Treasury, comprising several gentlemen of great experience and ability. It was formed upon general grounds of public utility, and cannot be attributed to particular hostility to Lord Palmerston. The reviewer goes on to observe that 'Mr. Herries had personally refused to serve under Lord Palmerston, and by doing so had supported the King's wishes.' Nothing in the memoir, which is the reviewer's only source of information on this subject, bears out in the slightest degree the gratuitous assumption that Mr. Herries was actuated on this occasion by any consideration of the King's wishes. Moreover, the surmise put forward as a fact is in direct contradiction to the first of the three points, which is, that Mr. Herries continued to hold his office in July because his resignation would have been a source of embarrassment to the King. It is also manifestly opposed to the Palmerston theory of the King's creature, whose assistance at the Treasury was desired for the King's business.

I have said enough to show the character of the sophistical compilation of groundless assertions, far-

fetched inferences, and illogical conclusions, which winds up with the offensive taunt derisively cast at me, that in defending my father's reputation I have provided new means of assailing it.

The minds of his readers having been duly prejudiced, the writer of the article proceeds to set before them his distorted view of the evidence furnished by the Memoir of the transactions in which Mr. Herries was concerned after Mr. Canning's death. Many facts are concealed. Others are either partially represented, or incorrectly stated. My own comments and arguments, which, for the most part, are not even mentioned, are not met with fair counter arguments. To set right on all points the garbled statement of the review it would be necessary to repeat all that I have already published, and against which no rebutting evidence is brought forward. Some examples only can be given of the treatment to which the Memoir has been subjected.

It is difficult to deal patiently with such captious remarks as this: 'Mr. Herries accordingly came up to London. But instead of driving to Downing Street to see the Prime Minister, he went first to Lincoln's Inn to see the Chancellor.' Of course he did. The Chancellor had asked him to call, and if Mr. Herries had driven to Downing Street he would not have seen the Prime Minister, who was then at Windsor. And what can be said of the twelve lines devoted to the startling discovery that two letters addressed to Lord Goderich at the same time and on the same subject—one, in ceremonious style, to be sent to the King, being enclosed in

another of a more familiar nature—were not precisely identical in terms as they were in substance? The three words, '*by your advice*' (italicised by the reviewer), appear in the latter but not in the former! All this is paltry hair-splitting. What follows is something worse. After mentioning the communication from Sir William Knighton, which induced Mr. Herries to re-consider (Memoir 1. 158) his first refusal to accept the Exchequer seals, the reviewer says: 'But he had hardly despatched this message to Windsor before Lord Goderich called upon him. Lord Goderich was, of course, embarrassed by Mr. Herries's new decision.' These words are obviously intended to convey the impression that the answer was sent to Windsor without the knowledge of Lord Goderich, and that the Prime Minister only learnt what had taken place on calling upon Mr. Herries after Sir William Knighton's departure. The contrary is the fact, as the reviewer cannot have failed to see. Sir William Knighton, before going back to Windsor, carried to Lord Goderich from Mr. Herries a message, or letter, explaining the whole matter, with which, therefore, the Prime Minister was fully acquainted when he called. Still more remarkable is another instance of misrepresentation. Omitting to mention the important circumstance that on the 16th of August Lord Goderich wrote to Mr. Herries, 'You must be at Windsor to-morrow, come what may,' the reviewer states that 'He' (Goderich) 'told Mr. Herries in the evening that the King desired his attendance at Windsor on the following day, but *obtained* [the italics are mine] *a promise from him*'

(Mr. Herries) '*that he would advise his Majesty "to desist from his present intentions and to think no more of me."*' Now, this is directly opposed to the truth. The 'Narrative' (1. 161), from which the last words quoted above are taken, shows that Mr. Herries distinctly refused to give the alleged promise, telling Lord Goderich that it was 'his business, as the head of the Government, to advise the King exclusively on the subject of appointments of so high a nature,' and recommending that he (Lord Goderich) should request the King 'to desist,' &c. The language held by Mr. Herries on this occasion, as on all others, shows that he was not, as pretended, 'ignorant of the Constitution.'

The awkward subject of the scene at Windsor on the 17th of August is handled with no little dexterity, prominence being given to such facts as, taken alone, might, by colourable interpretation, appear as evidence against the adversary of the Whigs, while those which are detrimental to the other side are left out of sight, so as to convey a general impression quite different from that which must be made upon any reasonable mind by the reading of the authentic documents which I have published. No one looking at the reviewer's version of their contents would imagine that the postponement of the King's decision on the question inopportunely raised was the consequence of Mr. Herries's firmness in declining to comply with the King's urgent—almost peremptory—demand. His first refusal to accede to Lord Goderich's request is duly recorded; all traces of his subsequent course in conformity with it are carefully obliterated. But a correct

report of what really did occur could not have been given without exhibiting the proved falsehood of the statement in the 'Autobiography,' the credit of which had, of course, to be saved. Although the untruth of that account has been demonstrated, and is, indeed, manifest, a particular expression, used in connection with an alleged fact which did not exist, is taken out of it and transferred to another set of circumstances, to which Lord Palmerston did not apply it, and to which it is not applicable. 'There can be no doubt,' says the reviewer, 'that Lord Palmerston was accurate in styling him (Mr. Herries) the King's Chancellor of the Exchequer and not Goderich's.' It was in reference to the *pretended* acceptance of the Seals, in opposition to Lord Goderich's wishes, on the 17th of August, that Lord Palmerston so styled him. It is in reference to the *actual* bestowal of the Seals, a fortnight later, by the deliberate advice of Lord Goderich—as to which the Autobiography is silent—that the words are now made to appear as having been used. Those who have not read the Memoir cannot detect the absurdity, as well as the disingenuousness, of this shifted quotation, because the reviewer has concealed the narrative (1. 174, 175) of what occurred at Windsor on the 31st of August, when Mr. Herries 'was informed by Lord Goderich that he was commissioned by the King, *in consequence of his own recommendation and that of the other Ministers present*, again to offer him the office of Chancellor of the Exchequer.' The friendly letter of Lord Goderich on the final settlement of the long-pending question is likewise burked. Huskisson was

one of 'the other Ministers present' who advised the King to give the Seals to Mr. Herries. But to this fact —an inconvenient one—no allusion is made in speaking of Huskisson's conduct in this business. It could not have been mentioned without exposing one of the numerous errors of the historian whose cause had to be supported.

One very grave complaint which I have made against him for reproducing a calumnious statement, without mentioning its authoritative contradiction, could hardly have been left unnoticed by the reviewer, who contrives, however, to misstate my words. I will not repeat them. No attempt is made to justify the wilful suppression of the truth in a matter deeply affecting a man's honour; but it is treated lightly, as nothing more serious than an offence 'against the laws of taste.' To the majority of readers my unrefuted charge will present a different aspect.

The method pursued by Mr. Spencer Walpole's advocate seems to consist, not in disproving what has been urged against his client, but in raising new questions which the adverse party is called upon to answer. This system is acted upon in dealing with my reply to an 'idle tale' concerning the King's desire to build a plurality of palaces in London with the aid of his 'creature.' Attention is diverted from the ridicule to which Mr. Walpole's architectural vision and his irrelevant references have laid him open, by deftly substituting for the original statement a different matter not brought forward by Mr. Walpole, but which I ought, I am told, to have considered. I pointed out the absurdity of the assertion, that in

August 1827 the King intended to build a number of palaces in London, and I observed that Buckingham Palace could not have been one of those spoken of, because it was already approaching completion in its *substantial* parts. This expression may not be strictly accurate. *Far advanced* would have been more so. I am informed by an eminent architect, that when a building is roofed in it is reckoned that two-thirds of the work are done. Although at the time in question there remained for execution the internal fittings, decorations, &c., and although various alterations in the original plan were made in subsequent years, I was warranted in excluding Buckingham House, begun in 1825, from a list of buildings projected in the second half of 1827. But it is objected to me that, before I ventured upon a confident contradiction of Mr. Walpole's specific allegations, I ought to have gone into the question, to which he does not allude, of the excess of the actual cost of Buckingham Palace over the original estimates. I cannot comprehend why I should have entered into a tedious examination of an expenditure for which Mr. Herries was not responsible, and which, in all probability, neither he nor anyone else could have prevented. In the only letter from him on this subject of Buckingham House which I have found (it was addressed to Sir William Knighton at the end of 1826), he dwells upon the necessity of '*resolute economy*,' and of having '*our builders and contractors bound down within specific limits*.' (The words in italics are underlined in the copy). But he was contemplating an impossibility. I did not require to be told that by

studying 'the proper authorities' I might have discovered a fact of which I was well aware before reading the censure of the critic. I knew that, as in the case of almost every architectural work of any importance (the most notable instance of enormous augmentation is that of the expense of the Palace of Westminster), the conjectural estimate for the reconstruction of Buckingham House was much too low, and was largely exceeded in reality. But I also know the fact, which the reviewer forbears to explain to the public, that no such estimate was voted by the House of Commons, and no grant of any specific sum was overstepped. By the Act (27th June, 1825) 'to authorise the application of part of the Land Revenue of the Crown for the repair and improvement of Buckingham House,' the Treasury was empowered to cause the payment, out of the produce of the hereditary Land Revenues, of 'such sum or sums of money as they shall deem necessary and expedient towards the payment and discharge of the costs . . . of such repairs, alterations, and improvements.' There was no limit of amount. Nor was the periodical rendering of accounts to Parliament made obligatory. The reviewer himself shows that a large proportion of the progressive excess was owing to alterations determined upon without the knowledge of the Treasury, and that a good deal of it belonged to a period posterior to Mr. Herries's official connection with the Board. Then with what show of justice can he be blamed for this additional outlay—which was perhaps unavoidable? No charge of connivance such as that which by implication is now for the first time put forward was

ever brought against Mr. Herries in Parliament, where he could have answered it, although at the time when all transactions of past Tory Governments were subjected to the most suspicious scrutiny he was an object of bitter hostility to their opponents ; and I would ask all right-minded men—Radical or Conservative—whether it is not a monstrous thing that after a lapse of half a century his sons should now be called upon to disprove this intangible accusation. If there had been any ground for believing that Mr. Herries was guilty of the conduct which is now imputed to him, he ought to have been—he would have been—impeached ; and his former colleague, Lord Palmerston, whose posthumous testimony is now invoked against him, but who took no steps to prevent the evil practices of which he is supposed to have had cognizance, would certainly have deserved the same fate as a complacent accessory after —or before— the fact. Further occasion for insinuation is found in the old story, of which a one-sided version is given, of the temporary application of a part of the French indemnity money to the works of Buckingham House. It furnishes me with an opportunity of adding a fresh argument to those already adduced against the Autobiography. Lord Palmerston may be presumed to have had this matter in his mind when he wrote his paragraph concerning 'questions coming on about palaces and Crown lands which the King was very anxious about' ; because it was indeed the subject of the principal question of that kind which did come on. The case stood thus. The Land Revenues allotted to the alterations of Buckingham House having proved for

a time inadequate by reason of other charges for the improvement of the public parks, &c., it was determined by Lord Liverpool, Mr. Robinson (the Chancellor of the Exchequer), and Mr. Canning, then Foreign Secretary, in conformity with the opinion of the King's Advocate, that certain sums remaining over from the indemnity fund, after the satisfaction of all just claims, should be advanced by way of loan to the Woods and Forests on condition of repayment from the accruing Land Revenue ; and these sums so lent were applied to Buckingham House. For that decision the three Ministers mentioned were solely responsible. It never was, or could have been, alleged that Mr. Herries had any share of that responsibility. After the death of both Lord Liverpool and Mr. Canning, a motion condemning the transaction on legal and constitutional grounds was made in the House of Commons in 1828. The conduct of Lord Liverpool's government was defended by Mr. Herries, Mr. Secretary Peel, and Mr. Secretary Huskisson. The motion of censure was rejected by a large majority—a circumstance which is not mentioned by the reviewer—so that the only competent authority having decided the question, I have a right to say that the arrangement was a lawful one. *Res judicata est.* Now if this 'question about palaces and Crown lands' had 'come on' during Mr. Canning's administration, that Prime Minister—whether Chancellor of the Exchequer or not—would have defended, better than anyone else could have done, the course for which he himself was responsible ; and Lord Palmerston, if he had been Chancellor of the Exchequer, must have

supported the head of the Government. Then what would the King have gained by putting a 'creature of his own' instead of Lord Palmerston into that office with a view to the discussion of this question? Nothing. The result would have been the same, with either Lord Palmerston or Mr. Herries at the Exchequer, if the question had 'come on' while the Cabinet of Lord Goderich—another of the responsible persons—was in existence. When it actually came on, the Duke of Wellington being in office, Lord Palmerston was a member of the Cabinet which resisted the motion of censure; and, if he had then been Chancellor of the Exchequer, it can hardly be doubted that he would have stood up for his friend and former colleague Goderich, just as Mr. Herries did who was not Chancellor of the Exchequer. It seems, therefore, impossible to perceive any connection between the discussion of this 'question about palaces,' &c., and the supposed desire of the King to have 'a creature of his own,' and not Lord Palmerston, at the head of the Finances.

'Mr. Herries,' it is said, 'was Financial Secretary of the Treasury when they' [these so-called misappropriations] 'were made; he must have been cognizant of them.' Certainly. He said so in the House of Commons, when, along with Peel and Huskisson, he justified the decision of the three Ministers. But it was not his act. 'And,' the reviewer adds, 'the King may naturally have desired to retain him at the Treasury' [we were told before that his refusal to remain there under Palmerston was in accordance with the King's wishes] 'and prevent the introduction of

some less compliant adviser.' But at the time supposed Mr. Herries was determined to leave the Treasury; and a 'compliant adviser' on the subject of the indemnity money was no longer wanted there, because the appropriations in question had already been made, and the fund was exhausted by the last actual payment on the 30th of June, 1827, Mr. Canning being then Chancellor of the Exchequer. His predecessor in that office, under whose directions the earlier payments had been effected, succeeded him as First Lord of the Treasury. The conclusion with which the reviewer's observations on this head are wound up—'The seeming difficulty, therefore, of explaining George IV.'s motives for forcing Mr. Herries on his Ministers' [the majority were in his favour] 'is thus removed, and the reasons for his reprehensible conduct become plain'—comes, then, to this. In order that something should be done which had already been accomplished and could not be repeated, Mr. Herries, whose advice was required for the doing of it, was forced upon a Prime Minister who had been one of the principal parties to the completed transaction. I may perhaps be excused if I declare my utter inability to understand such a mode of reasoning.

The 'conduct of Lord Palmerston' is contrasted by the reviewer with 'the policy of Mr. Herries.' 'It is at least certain,' he says, 'that Lord Palmerston generously relieved Lord Goderich from a promise which was a source of embarrassment to his chief. It is equally certain that Mr. Herries declined to terminate the difficulty by refusing an office which his colleagues

did not desire him to accept.' This is written in the face of the recorded facts, which are not disputed, that Mr. Herries refused the office in the first instance on the 14th of August, renewed his first refusal on the following day, again on the 16th recommended to the Prime Minister that he should advise the King to 'desist from his intentions'; on the 17th 'firmly declined' to receive the Seals pressed upon him by the King; on the 30th declared to Huskisson his readiness, 'as a solution of the difficulty, to quit office altogether,' telling Lord Lansdowne also, with perfect truth, that 'he had never sought the office' . . . which 'he had long strenuously refused;' and, finally, on the 31st, 'in order to avert the dissolution of the Government,' formally offered to serve at the Treasury under Huskisson.

The reviewer proceeds to re-arrange, after his usual manner, the story, truly told by me, of the incidents which preceded the fall of the Goderich Cabinet. I cannot go through it again in order to re-establish all that is omitted or transformed. But one point I am constrained to notice. It was not to be expected that, in spite of the mass of documentary evidence relating to the events of that period, the arguments fairly deducible from it, and the repeated declarations of Mr. Herries, which appear in the Memoir, any further attempt should be made, as it now is, to throw doubt on his good faith, and to give renewed currency to 'the base statement,' solemnly contradicted by him, as to his supposed understanding with the King. But against a fixed determination to condemn, nothing will avail. In opposition to the positive evidence shown by me, the

reviewer has none whatever to produce; but he places reliance on some inimical remarks in the Greville and Ellenborough diaries on an impression said to have been made in the House of Commons by Mr. Herries's persistent determination not to give any explanations in addition to those furnished by him on a previous occasion with great effect. Passing impressions noted in a diary cannot counterbalance solemn asseverations and proved facts. I am told, with the reviewer's habitual urbanity, that I am 'incapable of realising the position of my father and my father's critics' in that discussion. Whatever may be the opinion entertained of my capacity, I do not find it difficult to understand either the one or the other. As I have already endeavoured to make clear in the Memoir (11. 69), Mr. Herries was placed in an embarrassing situation in consequence of his having imprudently expressed a conviction which he firmly believed—as I do likewise—to be well founded, but all the grounds for which it was impossible for him to expose in the House. His assailants, perceiving his difficulty, were bent on driving him into a corner, and forcing him to say something which would inevitably involve him in a dispute with several of his former and present colleagues. Stress is now laid by my reviewer on Mr. Herries's refusal to answer the question whether, if, as he had previously declared, he had consulted no one on the subject of his resignation, anyone had consulted him; and my attention is drawn to the absence of any specific mention of that question in the unqualified declaration contained in the last paragraph (Memoir, 11. 77) of a paper printed privately by Mr.

Herries for the information of friends. This paper exactly reproduces the affirmations made by him in the House on the 18th of February, and maintained on the 21st; and in effect it does meet the question, because it completely covers all the allegations or insinuations made in the House, or out of it, to the effect that 'Mr. Herries was influenced in his conduct respecting the Financial Committee by *communications* from a higher quarter.' If his protest that 'his determination . . . . was adopted upon his own judgment and conviction alone, uninfluenced by advice, suggestion, or *communication* from any quarter whatsoever,' is to be believed—and the reviewer is pleased to say that he does not doubt its truth—it negatives the supposition of any kind of consultation between Mr. Herries and anyone outside the Cabinet. Whether such person had consulted, or been consulted by, Mr. Herries, there would obviously have been that communication which was denied.

Nothing is said in opposition to any one of the series of arguments, occupying seven pages, which I have adduced to demonstrate, independently of Mr. Herries's denial, that the charge clearly conveyed by words in Lord Palmerston's Autobiography, of concert with the Court for the destruction of the Cabinet, was calumnious, ridiculous, and impossible. I have a right therefore to assume that the reviewer feels his inability to invalidate my reasons, which he takes care not to mention. But for the sake of misrepresentation, some preliminary remarks are noticed. 'Mr. Edward Herries, however, thinks that if Lord Palmerston had believed

the story he would not have sat in the Wellington Cabinet with a man whom he deemed guilty of such odious treachery; and that, if he had not believed it, he would not have left recorded for posthumous publication a monstrous accusation against a dead man. He, therefore, insinuates that Lord Palmerston never wrote the biography at all.' There is no truth in this passage. The alternative conclusions stated above, and the consequent insinuation attributed to me in this place, are not mine. The reviewer cannot get out of my 'dilemma,' propounded in plain words, 'from which there is no possible escape' (11. 78).[1] But he can alter it, and then deal with his own alteration. This is a strange mode of criticism.

A few observations on Mr. Herries's connection with the Duke of Wellington's Administration begin with a crude assertion, for which no ground is alleged, and for which I, at least, cannot discover any, that there was a 'renewed action on the part of Mr. Herries and his Sovereign' on the occasion of the necessary rearrangement of Cabinet offices on the retirement of Mr. Huskisson and his friends. In his letter to the Duke, expressing a natural desire for some post of more real work than the Mint, Mr. Herries asked for no particular department. And it is to be observed

[1] When I wrote the words—'or he left recorded for posthumous publication against a dead man a monstrous accusation in the truth of which he did not believe'—I did not know, as I now do from the second edition of the 'Life of Lord Palmerston,' that the accusation was recorded against a living man, whom Lord Palmerston saw every day sitting opposite to him in the House of Commons. Whether it was or was not intended to be preserved for 'posthumous publication,' the recent explanation affords no means of judging.

that the scheme suggested by the King, in which Mr. Herries's name appeared, was similar to the plans proposed at the same time by Lord Ellenborough and others. (See Ellenborough Diary and Wellington Correspondence.) I read with regret some unworthy sneers which follow about salary and subsequent receipt of a suspended half pay; because I discern in them an indication of a descent in the *Edinburgh Review* to a lower tone than that to which the readers of a journal of this high character have been accustomed. 'Mr. Herries continued to draw £2,000 a year which his mere sinecure afforded him.' He received the same salary as his predecessors, Mr. Tierney, Lord Wallace, &c., &c., and his estimable successors, Lord Auckland, Mr. Abercromby (Lord Dunfermline), and many others. What is to be discovered in this fact? For the rest, I may observe that the letter, just before mentioned by the reviewer, to the Duke of Wellington, sufficiently proves Mr. Herries's unwillingness to hold a sinecure place in the Cabinet, and that, although his departmental business was slight, he did plenty of other work. The management of the Finance Committee, before which he elucidated the whole of the financial system of the country in such a manner as to elicit the unequivocal applause (which is burked) of his political adversaries, was in itself a labour of considerable magnitude. He always lent a willing hand, when required, to his constant and excellent friend, Mr. Goulburn (one of Lord Palmerston's *bêtes noires*), a man whose sterling worth has been inadequately appreciated. Lord Ellenborough, while jotting down disparaging notes, drew

largely on Mr. Herries's assistance. It is quite possible that he may not have 'renewed his application for removal to another office.' But whether he did so or not, another office—the Board of Trade—was given to him on the first opportunity. As to his 'comfortable pension as Commissary-in-Chief,' to which he 'reverted,' I will only say, without fear of contradiction, that he had fairly earned it. I do not know that all ex-Cabinet Ministers could show a better title to much larger pensions. But these are comparatively insignificant matters.

The purpose of the article would not be attained unless it could be shown that Mr. Herries did not possess the requisite qualifications for the high financial office which he was chosen to fill in 1827; because, if he was well qualified, his appointment was a proper one, and the Palmerston-Walpole theory must be dismissed as a vain dream. The last portion of the review is accordingly devoted to a laborious endeavour to depreciate those administrative and financial abilities which, with some degree of contradiction, Mr. Herries is admitted to have possessed up to the time of Mr. Canning's death, and the knowledge of which had been the sole reason for his being brought into political life by Lord Liverpool.

The principal proofs which I have given of the high estimation in which his capacity continued to be held long afterwards are, in accordance with a settled plan, put out of sight. A particular incident of minor consequence is presented as a specimen, and all that I have exhibited is dismissed with the slighting observation: 'All statesmen are forced to rely on persons below them

for technical information which they do not possess themselves.' . . . But in penning this comment the writer well knew that it was in no respect applicable to the confidential communications of 1841-42 which appear in the Memoir. Mr. Herries, then a private individual, neither in office nor in Parliament, was in no sense of the word the subordinate of the statesman who consulted him; and his solicited opinions on the principles—not the details—of Sir Robert Peel's proposed financial and commercial policy, embracing the questions of the re-imposition of the income-tax, the sugar duties, negotiations with Brazil, slave grown produce, &c., certainly did not belong to the category of 'technical information.' The words which follow those above cited—'but it does not consequently follow that the Minister should change places with his advisers'—are as irrelevant as the rest of the sentence. The inference here supposed was never drawn by me. From this passage and from others, one of which contains a personality unworthy of notice, any one might imagine that I had made or suggested a comparison between Mr. Herries and Sir Robert Peel. But nothing written by me can warrant such a supposition; and I earnestly protest against the studied use of mocking language having the appearance of an answer where nothing calling for it has been expressed. This is not criticism. It is wilful misrepresentation.

The same method is pursued in endeavouring, by a hypothetical argument against an imaginary proposition, to weaken the force of the testimony of the opinions entertained of Mr. Herries by two eminent authorities.

'It is utterly impossible,' says the reviewer, 'that either Lord Ashburton or Lord John Russell could have intended to compare Mr. Herries with Sir Robert Peel or Mr. Gladstone. It is evident, therefore, that the competence and knowledge which they were thinking of, were the competence and knowledge required in the subordinate advisers of a Minister, and not the competence and knowledge required in a financier.' The triumphant *therefore* is a *non sequitur*. The opinions which have been cited were expressed before Sir Robert Peel had been called to the administration of the finances, and before Mr. Gladstone had held any office, probably before his entrance into Parliament. The elements for the 'impossible comparison' did not exist. Lord Brougham's letter reporting the 'strong opinion expressed to him once and again by his friend, A. Baring, *afterwards Ashburton*,' obviously refers to a period antecedent to Sir Robert Peel's first Ministry, under which A. Baring was created Lord Ashburton. The precise dates of Lord John Russell's utterances I am unable to give; but I know that when he made them he was Paymaster of the Forces, the office which he held from 1830 to 1834. The reason, therefore, for the reviewer's reduced interpretation disappears.

It remains for me to produce a more recent and a much higher authority than any yet cited. It is the very highest that can be found. Within a very few days from the publication of the book which the *Edinburgh Review* is obliged to 'disparage,' Mr. Gladstone, in the midst of his multitudinous cares, found time to read it with attention, and to write three letters

on the subject of it to my brother, Sir Charles Herries. With the kind permission of the illustrious writer, I now give the following extracts from them.

'Hawarden Castle, Chester,
Dec. 3, 1880.

'My dear Sir C. Herries,—

'I thank you very much for the Memoir of your father. It has, I can assure you, drawn me off rather more than I can fully justify from the strict business of the day.

'I was not aware that Mr. S. Walpole's book had given occasion for a painful controversy. But to a limited extent I am a witness in the case. Carrying back my recollections to a period between fifty and sixty years back, I remember pretty distinctly Mr. Herries's rather peculiar position in the entangled politics of 1827–8. I also recollect quite well that his position in general repute was such that his appointment to be Chancellor of the Exchequer excited, and indeed could excite, no surprise whatever on the ground of calibre. His qualifications were eminent.'

'*Dec.* 4, 1880.

'I stopped my letter of yesterday on its way to you, for as I read on in the very interesting book I felt that I had not said enough.

'My view is one-sided, as I cannot check the book except by my own recollections. Those recollections, however, could not lead me in any degree to bear out any of the imputations against your father. His liberal offer about Huskisson ought, I should think, to silence them for ever. But a deeper impression has been made upon my mind by your disclosure of the fact that Mr. Herries foresaw in 1827 that necessity of resorting to an Income Tax in order to relieve the springs of British industry, which certainly was not discovered until a considerably later period, and under greater urgency, even by Sir Robert Peel. This very striking political prevision, in my opinion, stamps your father as having been not only what all the world knew him to be, an able administrator, but a distinguished financial statesman. I

think that during his *second* Parliamentary life he was for several reasons in a false position, and was not able to develop himself fully. But I must say that some of the papers in this work raise my estimate of his powers, and make me see that that public repute which I mentioned yesterday was more than justified. The paper on Russia, for example (with which I do not wholly agree), shows the flexibility of his mind and his capacity to deal ably, easily, and clearly, with a class of subjects probably new to him. . . . .

'I must, in honesty, congratulate you and your brother on the very effective tribute you have rendered both to your father's honour and to his character. . . . .'

'*Dec.* 7.

. . . . 'I have now read nearly the whole, and I must say always with increasing interest. This is no merit upon my part. I knew your father long, though not intimately, and received kindness from him. . . . . I have a great curiosity, never likely to be satisfied, to know why he did not get the Chancellorship of the Exchequer—

'1. In 1828.
'2. In 1852.'

. . . . . .

The judgment so generously pronounced on a politician of a different school by the first financial and administrative statesman of our age—the first, as I venture to think, of the present century since the death of Mr. Pitt—ought to have more weight than the aspersions of an Autobiography, the sneers of diarists, the detraction of Mr. Spencer Walpole, and the disparagement of the *Edinburgh Review*. In the face of such an opinion which confirms that of the King and the public in 1827, he must be a bold man who will persist in affirming that Mr. Herries was not fit to be entrusted with the management of the national finances. His

qualifications for the office being placed beyond doubt, the whole case which the reviewer so painfully struggles to sustain against him falls at once to the ground.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your most obedient Servant,

EDWARD HERRIES.

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